

# LIFE JACKET SAFETY TIPS

## **Life jackets save lives!**

If you're wearing one, your chances of survival from a capsize or a fall overboard will **DRAMATICALLY** increase. The same is true for your passengers, which is why it's critical for you to make sure **EVERYONE** on your boat, including you, wears a life jacket.

## **Life jackets are the law.**

In California, boaters must carry life jackets for every person on board their vessel. Also, a Coast Guard-approved life jacket must be worn by everyone on a personal watercraft, everyone being towed behind a vessel and all children under 13 (unless they're below decks or in an enclosed cabin).

## **Knowing how to swim does NOT drown-proof you.**

Even the best swimmers can (and do) get into trouble by being knocked unconscious and drown if they're not wearing a life jacket.

## **Life jackets that don't fit properly put you at risk.**

If they're too big, they can push up around your face and interfere with your breathing. If they're too small, they won't keep you afloat.

## **Make sure your life jacket is approved by the U. S. Coast Guard.**

You should see the U.S. Coast Guard official approval printed or displayed on the inside of the life jacket.

## **Make sure your jacket fits properly.**

To find out, zip/buckle your life jacket, raise your arms over your head, and have a friend gently pull up on the tops of the arm openings. If the jacket rides up over your chin, it's too big!

## **Make sure you use the right type of life jacket.**

Specific styles of life jackets are available for almost any kind of water activity, including fishing, personal watercraft riding, cold weather/hunting and paddling. There are even special life jackets for pets! To find out which style is best for you, visit [www.WearItCalifornia.com](http://www.WearItCalifornia.com)

## **If you don't have a life jacket, you can borrow one from a life jacket loan station.**

There are approximately 70 of these stations throughout California. To find a convenient location, visit [www.WearItCalifornia.com](http://www.WearItCalifornia.com).

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To order free life jacket safety publications, visit [www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/OnlineOrder](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/OnlineOrder).

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# BOATING SAFETY COURSE TIPS

**Take a boating safety course!** Even if you're a novice or experienced boater, there's always something new to learn and discover. A boating safety course can teach you useful information like the "rules of the road" and how to deal with emergency situations. You'll also learn about the leading causes of boating accidents—inexperience, recklessness and inattention—and steps to take to avoid them.

**Taking a boating safety course is simple and convenient.** Many different organizations and agencies offer them, so you can find one that works best for you. You can even take courses at home or online.

**A boating safety course can save you money.** That's because many boat insurance providers offer discounts to people who have successfully completed a boating safety course.

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To order a free Safe Boating Course or other boating publications, visit [www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/OnlineOrder](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/OnlineOrder).

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## CARBON MONOXIDE TIPS

**Carbon monoxide is a tough opponent to spot, even for an experienced boater.** Carbon monoxide has no color, no odor and no taste—but it can be deadly if you breathe too much of it.

**Don't "teak surf"!** Teak surfing is the (extremely dangerous) practice of being towed immediately behind a boat, where you can get exposed to deadly levels of carbon monoxide from the boat's motor.

**Don't swim near or under the back deck or swim platform of a boat while its motor is running.** In addition to the risk that comes from swimming near a rotating blade, this activity can expose you to deadly amounts of carbon monoxide.

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For more information about carbon monoxide, visit [www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/CODanger](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/CODanger).

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## ALCOHOL TIPS

**If you're operating a boat or water ski with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or more, you're breaking the law**—something no self-respecting boater would do. You can even be arrested when your BAC is less than 0.08% if the conditions aren't safe.

**Boating can magnify the side effects of alcohol use.** Effects include impaired judgment, reduced balance and poor coordination.

**Having a "designated driver" operate your boat doesn't increase your safety.** That's because intoxicated passengers in a boat are also a safety risk. They can (and do) fall overboard, swim too close to running propellers and capsize boats by standing up.

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For information or publications about the affects of alcohol and boating, visit [www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/Alcohol](http://www.dbw.parks.ca.gov/Alcohol).

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